

The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

From the Life of Saint Porphyry, Bishop of Gaza (+450)

by Mark the Deacon

Slightly edited from www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/porphyry.html (Chapters 65-69)

The soldiers and the Christians of the city went forth against the idols. And desiring first to overthrow the Marneion [the great pagan temple], they were set back; for the priests of that idol, having heard beforehand, barred the doors of the inner temple within with great stones; and taking down into the place called the sanctuary whatsoever precious vessels were in the temple, and moreover the very images of the gods themselves, they hid them there, and escaped through the same sanctuary by other ways up; for it was said that from the aforementioned sanctuary there were many passages going up into divers places.

Being set back, as I said before, the Christians turned against the other places of idols, and some they overthrew, and others they gave unto the fire, having seized all the precious vessels that were therein. But Saint Porphyry had laid a curse in the church upon every Christian citizen

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Saint Porphyrios
from *The Synaxarion*, Vol. 3, by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petra

that should take anything from the places of the idols unto his own profit; no man, therefore, of the citizens that believed took anything, save only the soldiers, and such strangers as were sojourning there. Therefore there went about with the lay-folk devout men of the clergy and the holy bishop Porphyry himself, restraining them that they should take nothing for themselves.

So they spent ten days overthrowing the temples of the idols, and after the said days they took counsel concerning the Marneion also, how they should deal with it. For some said that it should be digged down, and others said that it should be burned down, and others that the place should be purified and consecrated unto a church of God, and there was much deliberation of this matter. And at the last the holy bishop proclaimeth a fast to the people, and a prayer, that the Lord may reveal unto them what they must do. And having fasted on that day and prayed unto God concerning this matter, in the evening they celebrated the Holy Communion. But during the celebration of the Communion, a child of about seven years, which was standing with his mother, cried out suddenly, saying: 'Burn ye the inner temple unto the foundation; for many terrible things have been done in it, especially the sacrifices of human beings. And after this manner burn ye it: bring liquid pitch and sulphur and fat of swine, and mingle the three and anoint the brazen doors and set fire to them, and so shall all the temple be burned; for otherwise is it not possible. But leave ye the outer temple with the court. And after the burning, having purified the place, establish there a holy church.' And he said also this: 'I swear unto you before God, otherwise may it not be done; for neither is it I that speak, but Christ who is within me.' These words did he speak in the language of the Syrians. But when they heard they all marvelled and glorified God.

And this marvel came also unto the hearing of the holy bishop, and stretching forth his hands to Heaven he glorified God and said, 'Glory be unto Thee, Holy Father, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and understanding and hast revealed them unto babes.' [Matt 11:25] And he commanded that the child and his mother, after the people had been dismissed from the church, should be present in the bishop's house; and having put the child apart, he said to the woman: 'I adjure thee by the Son of the living God to say whether it was thou or some other, thou knowing him, who did put it into the mind of thy child to utter those words which he said concerning the Marneion.' And the

woman said: 'I yield myself up unto the terrible and dreadful judgement seat of Christ, if I foreknew anything of the things which my son did utter this day. But, if it seem good unto thee, lo! take the child and examine him with threats, and if any one hath put it into his mind to speak these words, he will be afraid and confess, but if he will say nothing else, it is manifest that he was filled with the Holy Spirit.' And the bishop having heard the speech of the woman and thought it good, said that she should be taken apart for a little, and the child be brought in; and the boy being set there he said unto him: 'Who put it into thy mind to utter in the church those things which thou spakest concerning the Marneion?' And the child was silent. Then the most holy bishop commanded that a scourge should be brought, and the child be stretched out, that he might be made afraid. And he that held the scourge lifted up his voice and cried out, saying: 'Who told thee to speak? Say, lest thou be smitten with the scourge.' But the boy stood dumb, uttering no word. Then we that stood around him said the same to him with threats; but he was not moved.

At the last, after we had all ceased, the boy opened his mouth and said in the Greek tongue: 'Burn ye the inner temple unto the foundation; for many terrible things have been done in it, especially the sacrifices of human beings. And after this manner burn ye it: bring liquid pitch and sulphur and fat of swine, and mingle the three and anoint the brazen doors and set fire to them, and so shall all the temple be burned; for otherwise is it not possible. But leave ye the outer temple with the court. And after the burning, having purified the place, establish there a holy church. I swear unto you again before God, otherwise may it not be done. For it is not I that speak, but Christ who is within me.' And the most holy bishop Porphyry marvelled, and all they that were with him, when they heard the bold saying of the boy, and how plainly he spake; and calling his mother, the bishop asked her whether she or her son knew the Greek tongue; but she affirmed with oaths that neither she nor her child knew Greek. And when he heard it, again the most holy Porphyry glorified God, and bringing three coins gave them to the woman. But the boy beholding the coins in the hand of his mother cried out, saying in the Syriac tongue: 'Take them not, Mother, lest thou also sell the gift of God for gold.' And we, hearing it, marvelled again exceedingly. But the woman gave back the three coins saying to the

bishop, 'Pray for me and my child and commend us unto God.' And the holy bishop sent them away in peace.

But at dawn he called together the God-fearing clergy and the Christ-loving lay-folk, and likewise the admirable Cynegius and the governors, and told them what the boy had said concerning the Marneion. And when they heard they were astonished and with one mind said that according to the saying of the boy, even so it should be burned. Taking, therefore, the liquid pitch and the sulphur and the swine's fat and mingling the three they anointed the inner doors, and having made a prayer they kindled the fire, and straightway all the temple took fire and was burned. And as many of the soldiers and of the strangers as were able seized out of the fire whatsoever they found, whether it was gold or silver or iron or lead.

*Dismissal Hymn of Saint Porphyrius
Fourth Tone*

The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, an icon of meekness, and a teacher of temperance; for this cause, thou hast achieved the heights by humility, riches by poverty. O Father and Hierarch Porphyrius, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Kontakion. Second Tone

Arrayed with a most sacred life, thou wast adorned with the priestly vestment, O all-blessed and godly-minded Porphyrius; and thou art conspicuous for miracles of healing, interceding unceasingly for us all.

Dismissal Hymn and Kontakion
© Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, MA

**St. Xenia Camp 2011
August 14-20 (n.s.)**

You may visit

**www.homb.org/stxeniacamp
or contact**

Catrin Thorp (617) 327-6204
catrin@homb.org
registrar

Kostas Kontogiannis (508) 493-3027
kostasandcatherine@msn.com
kitchen volunteer recruitment

Fr. Demetrios (781) 237-3949
jimhoulares@yahoo.com
other volunteer
and counselor recruitment

Registrations will not be accepted
after June 30

Please register early

The New Saint Philaret House

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My beloved Orthodox Christians:

At Saint Philaret House, the diocese center of the Holy Metropolis of Boston, we are faced with a very good problem. We are outgrowing the facilities. What was an ample home for the headquarters of our Metropolis eleven years ago (January 30, 2000), when we purchased Saint Philaret House, has, to all appearances, shrunk in size to cramped quarters, as our work load and activities have increased.

When we first began working here, there were three of us who shared the chores. Now there are many of us competing for space to do the work that has to be done. Saint Philaret House is where your diocese periodicals, *The True Vine*, and *The Faithful Steward*, pamphlets, pocket calendars, wall calendars are printed and stored; where all the Metropolis' archives are stored; where the Metropolis official baptismal, nuptial, divorce, chrismation and ordination certificates are kept on file; where our correspondence is written, where book-keeping is done; where meetings of the Diocese Board, St. Xenia Camp meetings, and clergy lectures are held; where your bishops conduct their business, and send out information and articles to our faithful; where all the printing, packing, and mailing of our publications is done; and where the sacred rites of the Church are performed on special occasions.

Essentially, we are in need of a home that has at least fifteen ample rooms for the Front Office, the Metropolitan's Office, the Auxiliary Bishop's Office and Residence, the Chapel, the Meeting Room, the Treasurer's Room, the Printing Room, the Packing Room, the Storage Rooms, the Classroom(s)—if we are to have a place for our Saint Symeon the New Theologian's Academy—plus four or five bedrooms, at least, for the residents and occasional guests.

Can we afford this? Thanks to the generosity of some of our faithful, we are now in the process of purchasing such a structure. But additional funds will be needed for the necessary renovations, plus the formation of a library for our Academy, the computers, facilities, and the furnishings needed to accommodate the students. Our treasurer, Father John Fleser, estimates that we will need about \$700,000 to accomplish these tasks.

This is why we are turning to you at this time. Every little bit, even the widow's mite, will help us reach this goal, so needed for the growing obligations of our Metropolis.

If you are in a position to help us, please consider this appeal. We trust that God will help us in this endeavor, and may He bless also every endeavor of yours that is unto salvation. Amen.

In Christ,

✠Ephraim, metropolitan



Please send donations to:

Saint Philaret House
1476 Center Street,
Rosindale, MA
02131-1417

The Repose of Mother Irene, Bright Saturday, 2011

Excerpts from the Eulogy given at the funeral on Wednesday of Thomas Week, April 21/May 4

In the three and a half years that we've known Ephraim and Irene—which actually seems much longer—we saw them go through battle after battle with her health difficulties. In just the last few years it was one thing after another. They wanted to amputate her foot. She refused that and patiently dragged her painful foot sideways. Her spine was so deteriorated it barely showed up on x-rays, and the slightest wrong movement caused her to have to be immobile for days. Many times she was hospitalized for bleeding and became very weak, but the cause wasn't found. Between the Lupus, the diverticulitis, the side effects of the medications, the osteoporosis and countless other things, Mother Irene was a living martyr. And yet a sweeter smile and humbler disposition was not to be found.

A few weeks ago Mother Irene was heartbroken to be in the hospital during Holy Week. We never heard her complain about the surgery to remove her entire colon, but what bothered her was that she wouldn't be able to attend the services. As many times as we could, at her fervent request, we had the phone at the chanting stand so that she wouldn't miss the Holy Week services, for which she was so, so grateful. When we met the Bridegroom, she was there. When we had Holy Unction, she was with us. (And then Fr. Ignatius brought her Holy Communion and Unction in person). When we read the Twelve Passion Gospels on Holy Thursday evening, she was there for the entire service with our Saviour on the Cross. When we chanted the Lamentations at our Saviour's burial, she was among the myrrhbearers. All of these services last many hours and it was her great delight to be able to hear them. On Holy Saturday she called—and insisted, in a way we had never heard her—that she wanted to hear the entire Midnight Paschal service and not miss a thing. At our Saviour's Holy Resurrection, Irene was there.

We would like to share a little about Mother Irene's last earthly days and her tonsure into the Holy Schema. Last Friday evening Ephraim came here very distraught and told us that the doctors had called saying that Mother Irene had taken a turn for the worse in a matter of hours and her body was shutting down. The Doctor told him that very serious decisions would need to be made the following day. When we arrived we all en-

countered something unexpected—she was intubated. That meant that Father couldn't give her Holy Communion. That also meant that she could no longer speak.

Remembering the true story of the man who wrote a book by blinking one eye as the alphabet was read to him, we wrote out the alphabet and indicated to Mother Irene to point. It was slow work. She was on kidney dialysis, pain medications, sedation, blood pressure medications, a breathing tube, and her organs were failing. Her hands were strapped down due to the tube that anyone would want to remove, and she had little strength or mobility in her hands. It didn't seem her head could turn or her body change position and yet, as all who were there will say, it was one of the most beautiful and memorable nights of our lives.

After we received the necessary blessings from her and our spiritual fathers, we asked Ephraim if we should offer Mother Irene the tonsure. He readily and immediately said, "Yes, whatever she wants, whatever is best for her." "And if she lives after the tonsure?" (They would then be brother and sister..) And he again said, "Yes!" Then we asked Irene who many times nodded her head in assent.

The tonsure went beautifully, the nursing staff was supportive and keeping a close eye on all her monitoring devices while also not giving her any more sedatives than necessary. Mother Irene maintained consciousness and participation through the entire long service, giving all the appropriate answers. Whenever she would try to move her restricted hand to make the Sign of the Cross, someone present would make it over her for her.

The next morning [Saturday] the tube was removed and she received the Holy Mysteries. At around 7:00 p.m. she peacefully gave her soul into the hands of our Saviour.

If a person reposes during Bright Week the gates of heaven are wide open, as symbolized by the open doors on the iconostasis. And the Church has always taught that the tonsure, as in Holy Baptism, makes a person new and clean again. Our blessed Sister, Mother Irene, was given all these gifts from our Saviour. Our Saviour's victory over death became Mother Irene's victory over death.



A History of the Panayia of the Mountains Monastery

On September 8/21, 1992, with the blessing of Elder Schemamonk Nicodim of Karoulia, a monk from the Skete of Prophet Elias brought two holy icons of the Mother of God—the Iveron “Portaitissa” (of the Portal) and the “Tricherousa” (of the Three Hands)—from Mount Athos in Greece to the Catskill Mountains in New York State. This is how the Panayia of the Mountains Monastery began.

It is in a beautiful setting between two higher mountains, “Mount Athos” and “Mount Tabor,” which rise straight up to the sky—like two arms raised straight up in prayer to God. The “Jordan River” runs between the mountains, flows to the ocean, and gives life to the many springs.

In the springtime, all the mountains blossom with a fragrant aroma, which continues to the end of fall. Revivifying summer breezes from the mountains flow down into the valleys, bringing much desired fresh air to everyone who wants to breathe it in again and again—especially those just returning from the cities. In autumn, the mountains are covered in a beautiful multi-colored carpet of leaves (green, orange, yellow, gold, red, and brown). Winter sunlight reflects off the millions of “diamonds” in the snow-covered carpets of the mountains.

Whoever visits these mountains, and gazes skyward in the pure mountain air at night, will see the gorgeous, unforgettable sight of billions of stars, like the sky of Mount Sinai. Seeing this lighted sky, one is awestruck, and gives glory to God Who fills the heavens with such beauty.

Sometimes, at sunrise, the clouds descend onto the mountains, like they did on Mount Tabor in the Holy Land; and you are “baptized” in the cloud, with its thousands of shimmering, glistening droplets of water. The clouds are so thick that you can actually move them with your hands as they surround you. When you emerge from them, you are covered with moist dew.

On the lower mountainside, just above a valley, well hidden in a forest, one discovers a beautiful, small church—a chapel dedicated to the Virgin Mary—called the Holy Dormition of the Mother of God. Here one will find perpetually burning oil lamps, lit by the Holy Fire brought from the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, to bring “Peace on Earth” to all mankind.

In 1997, with the blessing of Elder Archimandrite Methodius from the Mount of Olives, and Elder Archimandrite Anthony of Jordanville, NY, Panayia of the

Mountains Monastery was officially established—with its four-story guesthouse, a three-story building for visiting clergy and monastics (and a first-floor chapel, dedicated to the Holy New Martyrs of Russia), as well as two, two-story buildings for monastic residences. Higher on the mountain is a skete dedicated to the Prophet Elias, with a two-story structure containing monastic “cells” (small rooms) dedicated to “All Saints.” A few feet from the skete is a life-giving spring of sweet, pure, clear water which gives sustenance to three pure ponds below—filled with fish, a giant turtle, ducks, swans, and a boisterous beaver. Even higher up the mountain, above the skete, are caves for hesychasts.

The daily schedule at the monastery was as follows: at 4:00 p.m. ninth hour, Vespers, Matins, and first hour; a midnight service, third hour, sixth hour, Liturgy, a meal, and then an Akathist to the Theotokos; 10:00 a.m. Liturgy on Sundays and major feast days. Work at the monasery included gardening, beekeeping, painting icons, carving wooden crosses, making candles, incense, bread, and honey from the bees.

In 1999 and 2000, a series of torrential floods washed away roads and homes. The rain also flooded the monastery, forming new rivers of water never seen before in the area. The skies opened up and a torrent of water, a “Niagara Falls” of damaging proportions, cascaded down and devastated the whole area. There was no place left for people to stay at the monastery, so it is now taken care of by one monk

Attempts at fixing the damage and cleaning up the results of the flooding were made. Only the Dormition Church and the Prophet Elias Skete could be repaired; all the other buildings had to be demolished. A controlled burning of these badly damaged buildings by the local fire department accomplished these demolitions this year. Some of the debris from the wreckage is still being removed, and renovations on the Dormition Church and Prophet Elias Skete are continuing.

We ask your holy prayers and God’s grace for the raising up of the Monastery and its buildings like a “Phoenix” from its ashes.

Whoever wishes to volunteer or contribute financially to the ongoing renovations, please call or write:

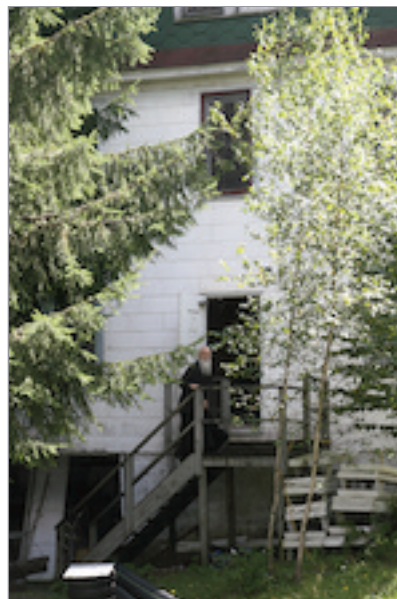
Fr. Onuphrius Agiorites
Panayia of the Mountains Monastery
387 Benton Hollow Road
Livingston Manor, NY 12758
(845) 292-0765



Holy Dormition Church



*Fr. Onuphrius and Fr. Ignatius in front of
Holy New Martyrs of Russia Chapel*



Fr. Onuphrius at back of the guesthouse



Cell of All Saints in Prophet Elias Skete



The guesthouse up in flames

Photos from Saint Seraphim's Church, Glen Allen, VA



Ordination in Toronto



On April 17/30, 2011, George Giantsopoulos was ordained to the Diaconate at Saint Nektarios Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Toronto, Ontario, by His Eminence, Metropolitan Makarios of Toronto. The Divine Liturgy was concelebrated by His Grace, Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle. Visiting clergy included Archimandrite Isaac and Hieromonk Menas of Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Brookline, Massachusetts. This is the first ordination in the Toronto community in about three decades.

Growing up in the Toronto parish of Saint Nektarios Cathedral where he was baptized, married to Diaconissa Tatiana in 2003, and now ordained Deacon, Father George was always involved in church community life. He often served as an Altar Server at the Cathedral and then at Saint Joseph of Arimathea, where

he and Diaconissa became active members in the parish. Saint Nektarios and Saint Joseph of Arimathea are very special saints to them and they are both grateful for their guidance and protection.

He is the youngest of three children of Gregory and Eleni Giantsopoulos, and first-cousin to His Grace, Bishop Demetrius (their mothers are sisters). Through the prayers of many, and especially through the prayers of his grandmother, Mother Paraskevi, and his late grandfather, Pavle, they have welcomed this great blessing openly.

Father George will serve as a diocesan deacon in the Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Toronto. He and Diaconissa wish to thank everyone for their thoughts and prayers.

Deacon to Serve at Convent of the Meeting of the Lord

I was born in Scottcity, Kansas in 1965 to Clarence and Alberta Born. My father was a Lutheran minister. I was the youngest child of four boys. I lived in several places in Kansas, eventually ending up attending my first year of college in Wichita. In 1985, I moved to Washington and continued my education at Seattle Pacific University.

It was at the university that I started to encounter Orthodoxy as I studied Russian, and took a trip to Russia as part of my course of study. The beauty of the Church really impressed me and I felt a real spiritual connection with its forms of worship that I felt nowhere else. Already in college I had begun to become very dissatisfied with many things I found in the Protestant churches. After graduating, I started to investigate the Orthodox Church more fully. I

checked out several Greek and Russian Churches but ended up at Saint Nectarios. One of the reasons was that the services were in English, but some of the other Orthodox Churches just seemed strange, even given my limited experience with the Orthodox faith at the time. My mind still has a clear memory of how, after attending services for a while, I approached Fr. Neketas and asked him about the possibility of becoming Orthodox. He

told me that people come to Saint Nectarios from other Christian churches, thinking that this is just another denomination, and that they are already baptized. But we say, "No way Jose, you have to get baptized into the Orthodox Church!" This put me off a little, but I was undeterred and soon became a catechumen.

After driving home from my first Pascha I knew there was no turning back. The words of Vladimir's envoys to Greece, when he was searching for the true faith resonated with me: "the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth

there is no such splendour or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here." Also to me it seemed that the Church "taught as one having authority," and not as multitudinous voices I heard coming from the Protestant churches.

A year later I was baptized by Fr. Neketas, taking the name Anastasios, Anna Malzeff serving as my Godmother. Sometime in 2005, David Ruffner, now Fr. David, who was the ecclesiarch at Saint Nectarios Cathedral, asked me if I wanted to assisted him, and I

became an ecclesiarch. Later that year I met the woman who would become my wife, Noi, who was a catechumen at that time. She was born in Laos, and as a child was a refugee from the Vietnam war. She grew up in the Dallas projects, and in 1996 moved to Seattle on her own. First she became a member of a non-denominational church, but later found Saint Nectarios. In baptism, she took the name Elizabeth and goes by the name



Ella, the nickname of her patron, Saint Elizabeth the New Martyr of Russia. We married in 2007. After a year of marriage we bought a house and took in my aged parents, who we took care of for three years. They recently moved into an adult care home after experiencing some health problems. We are expecting a daughter to arrive in late July.

I plan to serve as deacon at the Convent of the Meeting of the Lord in Stanwood, Washington, where I was ordained on May 1/14, 2011, by Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle.

Announcement of the Holy Synod

On Palm Sunday, in church in Portland, Oregon, Metropolitan Moses announced publicly that he had petitioned to join and has been tentatively accepted by the Synod under Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens. This automatically removes him and Bishop Sergios from our Church.

Our bishops have prepared the following announcement.

6/19 April, 2011
Tuesday of Holy Week

In his “Addendum” (dated December 6/19, 2010), His Eminence, Metropolitan Moses committed a very serious crime against his fellow bishops, when he issued a “*de facto* canonical release” to all the clergy of the Holy Orthodox Church of North America in order that he and they might unite themselves to the Synod of Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens, Greece “immediately.”

According to the 18th Canon of Ancyra, a bishop who commits such seditious acts is subject unconditionally to excommunication and defrockment from the priesthood. In a number of private letters addressed to him, the Holy Synod has pleaded with His Eminence to submit an apology for his public and inflammatory acts against his fellow bishops and the flock entrusted to them, but he has refused to do this or even admit to any wrongdoing, despite his public canonical violations. Furthermore, of late, he has taken this issue beyond the membership of the Holy Synod and made it public, claiming that he is being denied a canonical trial. However, a canonical trial is necessary *only when a person’s guilt is in doubt*. In the case of His Eminence, his guilt is evident and blatant, since his “Addendum” was posted publicly by him to all and sundry. Members of the Holy Synod received emails from Europe, commenting on His Eminence’s “Addendum.”

Below is the text of Canon 18 of Ancyra:

If any who have been constituted bishops, but have not been received by the parish to which they were designated, shall invade other parishes and wrong the constituted [bishops] there, stirring up seditions against them, let such persons be suspended from office and communion. But if they are willing to accept a seat among the presbyterate, where they formerly were presbyters, let them not be deprived of that honor. But if they shall act seditiously against the bishops established there, the honor of the presbyterate also shall be taken from them and themselves expelled.

Apostolic Canons 14 and 34, as well as Canon 21 and 22 of Antioch, the 2nd Canon of the Second Ecumenical Council, Canon 5 of the Fourth Ecumenical Council, and Canon 1 of Sardica all call for the censure and punishment

of bishops who intrude into the affairs of another bishop’s diocese.

His Eminence continued his policy of interference into another bishop’s diocese by means of telephone calls, attempting to persuade some of our clergy to follow him in his path, as they themselves have informed us.

In addition, despite his denials, we know that His Eminence, together with Bishop Sergios, unilaterally submitted a petition to be received by another Synod.

In spite of the fact that the Holy Canons call unconditionally for defrockment and excommunication in such cases, the Holy Synod resolved instead to act with clemency and ask for a simple apology.

In a previous letter to him and Bishop Sergius (dated March 9/22, 2011), we three bishops wrote the following:

We must say that, if this difference and division has progressed to such an extent that His Eminence [Moses] can no longer work together with our Holy Synod, or even simply apologize for the mistake that he has made, and cannot abide in agreement with his brother bishops, we say with no animosity—although with a heavy heart—Brother, you may go where you will. We wish you no ill. Your intransigency, however, will only generate further discord and turmoil. If the members of our Synod cannot simply apologize for a mistake, how, then, can they act in concord and truth? Such is the true conciliar spirit of the episcopate.

We see now that his intransigency has finally led him to a break with his fellow bishops. Should he or the clergy with him begin a campaign of ill-will, slander or misinformation against us, we, your hierarchs, beg of you *not* to respond. Let our response be the silence of prayer, a prayer that God forgive both them and us for our personal failings. We have other, more useful, things to do than engage in useless polemics which convince no one, and only lead us into temptation and away from that “which is needful.” If it is truly necessary that there be a response of some sort, let it come only from your hierarchs. We have received many gifts and benefits from God. Let us then concentrate our efforts in showing our appreciation for these gifts by increasing our love for God and the study of the Holy Faith that has been imparted to us.

Glory be to God for all things!

✠Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston

President of the Holy Synod

✠Metropolitan Makarios of Toronto

✠Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle

Secretary of the Holy Synod

A Canonical and Legal Entity

Both, His Beatitude, Archbishop Auxentius of Athens, of blessed memory, and His Eminence, Metropolitan Maximus of Cephalonia affirmed that we had the authority to govern our affairs in North American and also of electing and ordaining our own bishops. We did not ask for this privilege; rather, these hierarchs simply granted it to us, because, we believe, they were enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

This is what Metropolitan Ephraim, Metropolitan Makarios, and Bishop Demetrius affirmed in a letter written on December 10/23, 2010. This statement is a distillation of countless meetings with His Beatitude, Archbishop Auxentius of Athens over the years with our bishops and clergy from North America.

Not once, in all those countless encounters—in one year alone, Metropolitan Ephraim travelled to Greece six times—did Archbishop Auxentius ever mention that the Church administration in North America should be incorporated as a subsidiary of the Church of Greece. As has been mentioned many times before, the Archbishop affirmed again and again to many of our clergy, both here in America and when they visited Greece, we were responsible for governing our affairs in North America. This included the privilege of electing and ordaining our own bishops.

As for the episcopal ordinations that took place during the time when Metropolitan Makarios was *locum tenens* of the throne of Athens, this was in a period when we, the bishops of North America, were **temporarily in charge of the affairs of the Church of Greece!**

As we wrote in the article, “Our Mother Church” (see attached document):

For years after Archbishop Auxentius’ repose, we said we were *de jure* the Church of Greece and therefore maintained the locum tenency of the throne of Athens. But, despite our efforts to help the situation in Greece, we could not do so.

In retrospect, why, one may ask, would any clergyman in Greece want to be under a bishop in North America? Especially when there are at least 13 old calendar jurisdictions in Greece! A good question.

The locum tenency that we maintained, however, was only a *temporary* measure. Although we maintained it “temporarily” for some fourteen years, strictly speaking, and according to the Holy Canons, a locum tenency can be maintained *only for one year*.

Canon 74 of Carthage, for example, is quite clear on this point:

It has been decreed that it is not lawful to a *locum tenens* (in Greek: *topotiritís*) to retain the see to which he has been appointed as *locum tenens*, ...but let him take care that within a year he provide them with a bishop. But if he fail to do so, when the year is done, another *locum tenens* shall be appointed.

Our efforts to find a suitable candidate for the episcopacy in Greece all came to nought, despite the fact that it is clear that we went above and beyond what is permitted by the Holy Canons in our efforts to help the Church of Greece. But our identity as a *de facto* autonomous Church entity in North America had been confirmed by Archbishop Auxentius again and again in our meetings with him, and our later efforts in Greece were only a temporary measure.

It is one thing to say that our roots are in Greece, and that, because of the locum tenency, we were *de jure* and temporarily acting as bishops of the Church of Greece in an effort to help there (though far longer than what the Holy Canons permit). It is quite another to say that we are *permanently and canonically* the Church of Greece, even though the locum tenency no longer exists. Some claim that the abandonment of the locum tenency was “uncanonical” (but they cite no canons to support this claim). To the contrary, the termination of the locum tenency was *the return to the canonical norm*, as one can clearly see from the Holy Canons that we have cited below.

Furthermore, there are two very important documents that testify to this legal and canonical entity that we possess as the Holy Orthodox Church in North America:

Our by-laws

The Holy Canons

The By-Laws: If we examine the by-laws, both of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America and of the Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston, we will see no mention whatsoever of the word “Greece.” There is

no mention, for example, of “The True (or Genuine) Orthodox Church of Greece,” or not even of “The True Orthodox Church of Greece in Exile,” or of “The True Orthodox Church of Greece Abroad” or anything of the sort.

If we were legally under the Church of Greece, the by-laws should, at least, have said that we are the “Greek Orthodox Church in North America” or perhaps, “The Holy Orthodox Church in North America – a Subsidiary [or Dependency] of the True Orthodox Church of Greece.”

Instead, we find nothing of the sort. In fact, Archbishop Auxentius never demanded such a thing, or even mentioned it at all. To the contrary, he was always encouraging us to organize ourselves and to look to it to govern our affairs, and to choose our own bishops.

Metropolitan Moses visited Greece as a bishop with our hierarchs only after Archbishop Auxentius’ repose. Consequently, he never had any dealings whatsoever with Archbishop Auxentius or Metropolitan Maximos, so how could he know any information of what was said and determined all those years prior to his elevation?

The Holy Canons: The Holy Canons are crystal clear concerning this matter also: the Church of one region must not interfere in the affairs of a Church of another region, *unless invited to do so*.

Here are some of those canons:

Apostolic Canon 14: A bishop is not to be allowed to leave his own parish, and pass over into another, although he may be pressed by many to do so, unless there be some proper cause constraining him, as if he can confer some greater benefit upon the persons of that place in the word of godliness. And this must be done not of his own accord, but by the judgment of many bishops, and at their earnest exhortation.

Apostolic Canon 33: If any one of the clergy or laity who is excommunicated, or not to be received, shall go away, and be received in another city without commendatory letters, let both the receiver and the received be excommunicated. But if he be excommunicated already, let the time of his excommunication be lengthened.

Apostolic Canon 34: The bishops of every nation must acknowledge him who is first among them and account him as their head, and do nothing of consequence without his consent; but each may do those things only which concern his own parish, and the country places which belong to it. But neither let him (who is the first)

do anything without the consent of all; for so there will be unanimity, and God will be glorified through the Lord in the Holy Spirit.

Council of Antioch Canon 21: A Bishop may not be translated from one parish to another, either intruding himself of his own suggestion, or under compulsion by the people, or by constraint of the bishops; but he shall remain in the Church to which he was allotted by God from the beginning, and shall not be translated from it, according to the decree formerly passed on the subject.

Council of Antioch Canon 22: Let not a bishop go to a strange city, which is not subject to himself, nor into a district which does not belong to him, either to ordain any one, or to appoint presbyters or deacons to places within the jurisdiction of another bishop, unless with the consent of the proper bishop of the place. And if any one shall presume to do any such thing, the ordination shall be void, and he himself shall be punished by the synod.

Council of Sardica Canon 1: Hosius, bishop of the city of Corduba, said: A prevalent evil, or rather most mischievous corruption must be done away with from its very foundations. Let no bishop be allowed to remove from a small city to a different one: as there is an obvious reason for this fault, accounting for such attempts; since no bishop could ever yet be found who endeavoured to be translated from a larger city to a smaller one. It is therefore evident that such persons are inflamed with excessive covetousness and are only serving ambition in order to have the repute of possessing greater authority. Is it then the pleasure of all that so grave an abuse be punished with great severity? For I think that men of this sort should not be admitted even to lay communion. All the bishops said: It is the pleasure of all.

Council of Sardica Canon 3: Bishop Hosius said: This also it is necessary to add,—that no bishop pass from his own province to another province in which there are bishops, unless indeed he be called by his brethren, that we seem not to close the gates of charity. And this case likewise is to be provided for, that if in any province a bishop has some matter against his brother and fellow-bishop, neither of the two should call in as arbiters bishops from another province. But if perchance sentence be given against a bishop in any matter and he supposes his case to be not unsound but good, in order that the question may be reopened, let us, if it seem good to your charity, honour the memory of Peter the Apostle, and let those who gave judgment write to

Julius, the bishop of Rome, so that, if necessary, the case may be retried by the bishops of the neighbouring provinces and let him appoint arbiters; but if it cannot be shown that his case is of such a sort as to need a new trial, let the judgment once given not be annulled, but stand good as before.

2nd Ecumenical Council Canon 2: The bishops are not to go beyond their dioceses to churches lying outside of their bounds, nor bring confusion on the churches; but let the Bishop of Alexandria, according to the canons, alone administer the affairs of Egypt; and let the bishops of the East manage the East alone, the privileges of the Church in Antioch, which are mentioned in the canons of Nice, being preserved; and let the bishops of the Asian Diocese administer the Asian affairs only; and the Pontic bishops only Pontic matters; and the Thracian bishops only Thracian affairs. And let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited. And the aforesaid canon concerning dioceses being observed, it is evident that the synod of every province will administer the affairs of that particular province as was decreed at Nice. But the Churches of God in heathen nations must be governed according to the custom which has prevailed from the times of the Fathers.

4th Ecumenical Council Canon 5: Concerning bishops or clergymen who go about from city to city, it is decreed that the Canons enacted by the Holy Fathers shall still retain their force.

So, according to the Holy Canons, we, the bishops in North America, are strictly forbidden to interfere in the affairs of the Church of Greece, or any other foreign region, unless invited to do so; likewise, the bishops of other regions are strictly forbidden to interfere in our affairs. We may involve ourselves in the ecclesiastical matters of another local Church *only* if they invite us to do so. The converse of that is true also. Anything else violates the Holy Canons.

As the article “Our Mother Church” demonstrates, the Church of Greece under His Beatitude Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens is not, and never was, “our Mother Church.” Although we wish to have cordial relations with them, we owe them no canonical obligations.

When His Eminence Metropolitan Makarios of Toronto resigned the locum tenency of the throne of Athens in October, 2010, we, as a Synod, *returned to the canonical norm*. And, as we mentioned many times

before, this act of Metropolitan Makarios was also a gesture of goodwill to the Synod under Archbishop Kallinikos of Athens. Any other interpretation of that gesture is a perversion of its original intent.

February 1/14, 2011
St. Trypho

Our Mother Church

One clergyman has accused us of “abandoning Archbishop Auxentius’ legacy and cathedra.” This is not true. Both Archbishop Auxentius and Metropolitan Maximos made us effectively autonomous and we retain that canonical identity. We have no need to submit to any Synod in Russia or Greece, but only to enter into mutual relations and communion. For years after Archbishop Auxentius’ repose, we said we were *de jure* the Church of Greece and therefore maintained the locum tenency of the throne of Athens. But, despite our efforts to help the situation in Greece, we could not do so.

In retrospect, why, one may ask, would any clergyman in Greece want to be under a bishop in North America? Especially when there are at least 13 old calendar jurisdictions in Greece! A good question.

We are not Matthewites to say that we alone are Orthodox, especially when many in Greece have kept a strong Orthodox confession.

When mutual excommunications were lifted (against Archbishop Auxentius and also against several Kiouisis bishops), we observed that the majority of confessing, traditional Orthodox Christians were with the Kiouisis Synod. Therefore, we, with our canonical identity wished to join our voices to theirs in confession of the Orthodox faith. Both sides knew that this process would need much time and patience.

However, the Church of Greece had already established our canonical identity (through Archbishop Auxentius). No one, therefore, can issue “*de facto* canonical releases,” nor depart from the canonical entity of HOCNA without violating the holy canons and the legacy of Archbishop Auxentius.

We were established by Archbishop Auxentius after the departure of the Kiouisis bishops, whom we considered at that time to be in schism. For us, Archbishop Auxentius was the legitimate Primate of the faithful of the Church of Greece — not those who departed from him.

At the time when we petitioned to come under Archbishop Auxentius and were accepted, one of the bishops of the Kiouisis Synod wrote to us and invited us to join them instead. We answered him with a long letter, demonstrating to him that they were in schism from their canonical Archbishop. We pointed out to him that the reasons for which they left their canonical Synod and “deposed” their Archbishop were unsupportable, and, in addition, were not matters of faith. Our letter to this bishop (which was never answered) was originally written in Greek and later translated into English.*

However, as we have said, after Archbishop Auxentius’ repose, most parishes in Greece sought refuge under the Kiouisis Synod. Nevertheless, we had already been established (by Archbishop Auxentius) as an autonomous canonical entity, which, therefore, declared that we were his true successors. Yet, in Greece, since no hierarchy or parishes remained, we saw and recognized the situation there, and concentrated our efforts in tending the flock that was entrusted us by God here in North America.

After the Kiouisis Synod repealed the “condemnation” of Archbishop Auxentius, we also wished to rec-

ognize this new reality. But the Kiouisis Synod and its bishops are not our progenitors and founders. We have never been subordinate to them, nor do we have any canonical dependency from them or owed to them. They are (for us) a newly recognized canonical body to which we owe no obligations. We desire to be eventually in communion with them as Orthodox Christians, but they have no authority over us. They have our respect as the new guardians and successors of an apostolic foundation, but they have no canonical prerogatives over us (see Canon 2 of the 2nd Ecumenical Council). For the sake of Church unity, we are willing, as St. Photius the Great says, to “consign to oblivion” the past issues with the Kiouisis Synod. But they are not our Mother Church. The Synod of Archbishop Auxentius is our Mother Church.

St. Philaret House

This document was prepared by Priestmonk Haralampos, with the endorsement of Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston and Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle.

*Copies of this letter are available both in Greek and English.

Pilgrimage to Ukraine, October 2–14, 2011

Led by Archpriest Rodion Laskowski
With the blessing of Bishop Demetrius of Carlisle

Pilgrimage sights include Kiev, Pochayev, Rivne, and Sevastopol.

Cost: \$2,700 — includes \$900 Boston to Kiev return airfare. Those meeting us in Kiev will be charged \$1,800.

To Register: Please send a \$200 deposit to Fr. Isaac, 278 Warren Street, Brookline, MA 02445-5927. The remainder is due June 17.

For more information: Contact Matushka Tatiana Kukunov (781) 320-0102 or email tkukunova@aol.com.

Future Trips with St. Paul’s Fellowship of Labor

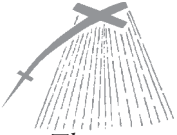
Holy Land Pilgrimage, Jerusalem: June 17–25, 2011

Convent of the Meeting of the Lord, Stanwood, WA: July 9–16, 2011

Holy Theotokos Convent, Newmarket, ON: July 23–30, 2011

New England Tour: August 7–14, 2011

Contact St. Paul’s Fellowship of Labor by calling (814) 386-5254 or by emailing thespfl@gmail.com



About Our Logo
A Divine Confirmation

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

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THE DIOCESE NEEDS SUPPORT

“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward* is in need of your support.



The Faithful Steward

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